

Making an Impact and Accounting for It

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What is Impact?

- Journal Impact Factors
- “Economic Impact”
- Socio-economic Innovation

- Economic
- Social
- Public policy
- Cultural
- Environmental
- Quality of life
- Education

What is Innovation?

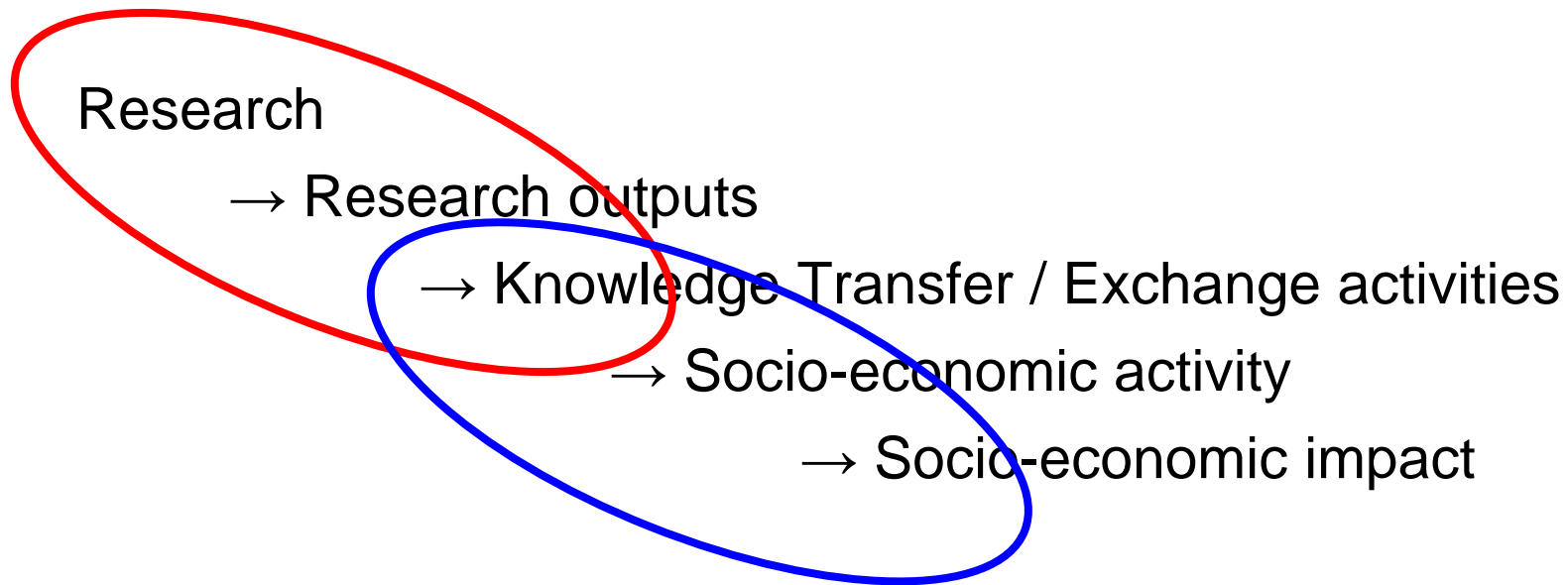
“A new way of doing something”

“The translation of ideas / intellectual property (from anywhere) into socio-economically productive activities”

“Invention is the first occurrence of an idea for a new product or process, while innovation is the first attempt to carry it out into practice”

- Technology innovation
- OECD innovation types:
 - Process, Product, Marketing, Organisational
- Policy innovation
- Innovation in socio-cultural behaviours

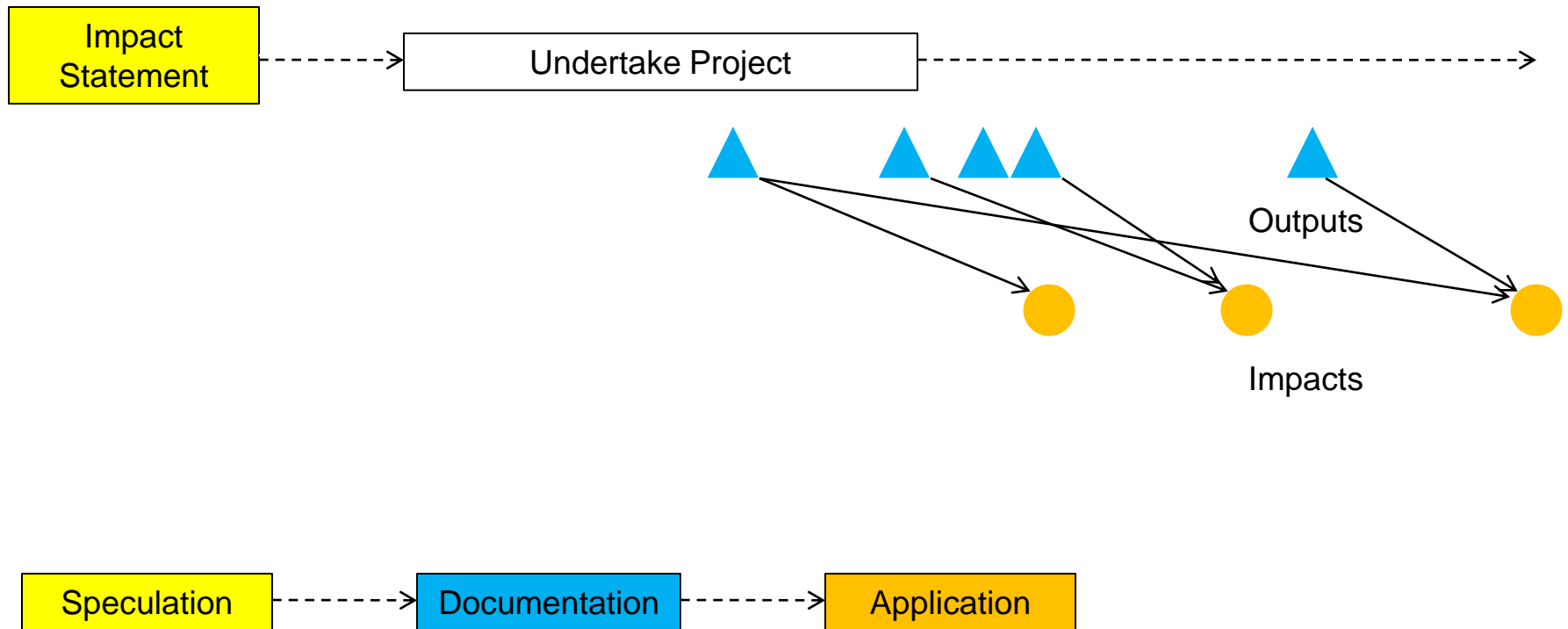
The Relationship of Research to Impact



- Is knowledge exchange part of the research process?
- Or research part of the innovation process?
- Governmental desire to support / initiate economic development
 - Interventions that are not research
 - Danger of individuals and institutions acting as if they are research
 - These are service contracts, with contractual deliverables
- Ground-breaking research and innovation both require flexibility and freedom to react
 - Not a standard purchase of a commodity
 - Overhead involved in measurement of the immeasurable
 - Audit requirements that are so burdensome they deter engagement

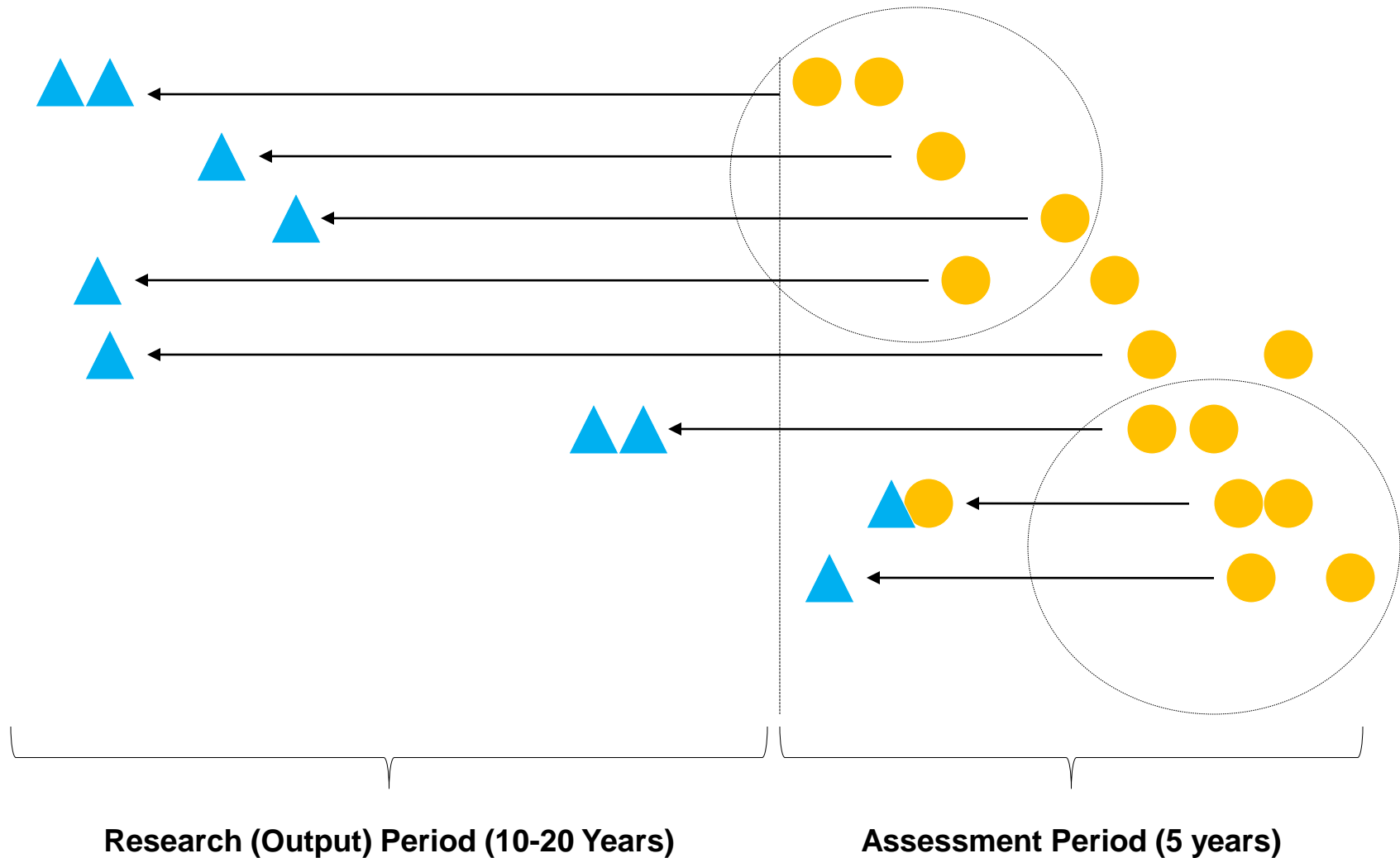
- Project Level
 - Prospective and as it happens
- Unit Level
 - Retrospective

Impacts from a Research Project



- RCUK Research Outcomes Project
- Up to 48 types of information, linked to projects and the people involved in them
 - e.g. publication, career development, engagement, exploitation
- Challenges:
 - Period over which data needs to be collected (3-5 years after end of project)
 - Range of information, and its variety of type
 - Engagement of individuals and institutions
 - Using the information

Periodic Assessment of Research Impact



- Context is the Research Excellence Framework
 - Assessment of outputs, environment, impact
- Impact occurring during the assessment period (i.e. five years)
- Based on research that took place a reasonable period before
- Evidence to be provided:
 - Specific case studies
 - A wider context statement with a number of indicators
- Challenges:
 - Time lags between research output and impact
 - Non-linearity of the process and attribution of the contribution of the research to the impact
 - Immeasurability of impact
 - Corroboration of the contribution and the impact

- Research and innovation is a highly complex, behavioural system, which needs to be appropriately integrated
- It involves non-linear, multi-factorial, long-term and iterative processes
- Different perspectives give different emphases
- Managing creativity needs a subtlety of approach, at individual, institutional and sectoral levels
- Assessment of performance is non-trivial
- Trend to collect a range of data; the challenge is in using it for evaluation
- Need to be flexible, rather than introduce tight controls

Questions and Discussion